

NCA
VOC FOR PGM/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-5857
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SMALLPOX

ANNCR:

WORLD HEALTH AUTHORITIES BELIEVE THAT SMALLPOX IS A DISEASE OF THE PAST. BUT ONE LAST SEARCH FOR IT IS BEING PLANNED JUST TO MAKE SURE. V.O.A.'S BOB CHANCELLOR HAS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT:
VOICE:

ETHIOPIA SAYS IT IS REOPENING THE FULL-SCALE SEARCH FOR SMALLPOX CASES IN THE OGADEN DESERT REGION. THE HEAD OF THE ETHIOPIAN ANTI-SMALL POX PROGRAM ATO YEMANI TEKESTE TOLD THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION THAT SPECIALLY TRAINED UNITS WOULD MAKE HOUSE-TO-HOUSE SEARCHES TO CHECK IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY NEW SMALLPOX VICTIMS DURING THE EIGHT MONTH LONG OGADEN WAR WITH SOMALIA. THE HUNT WILL ALSO MOVE THROUGH THE SPARSELY SETTLED AREAS OF THE DESERT REGION.

THE LAST KNOWN CASE OF SMALLPOX IN ETHIOPIA WAS IN AUGUST NINETEEN SEVENTY-SIX, AND CHECKS IN THE OGADEN SINCE HAVE PROVEN NEGATIVE. MISTER YAMANI SAID HE DOES NOT EXPECT TO FIND ANY NEW CASES. THE LAST KNOWN CASE OF SMALLPOX IN THE WORLD OCCURED LAST OCTOBER IN THE SMALL SOMALIAN TOWN OF MERKA. BUT THE SHIFTING OF PEOPLE BACK AND FORTH ACROSS BORDERS DURING THE WAR, THE OGADEN NOMADIC LIFE STYLE AND THE DISRUPTION CAUSED BY THE FIGHTING APPARENTLY HAVE PROMPTED HEALTH AUTHORITIES TO CONDUCT THIS RECHECK.

THE HEAD OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S SMALLPOX ERADICATION PROGRAM DOCTOR ISAO ARITA OF JAPAN SAID THE DISEASE WILL BE DECLARED ELIMINATED BY NINETEEN EIGHTY IF EIGHTEEN MONTHS PASS WITHOUT THE RE-APPEARANCE OF THE DISEASE. THIS WILL BE THE FIRST DISEASE EVER ELIMINATED ENTIRELY, THE RESULT

OF A TEN YEAR THREE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLAR EFFORT THAT ENLISTED THE AID OF FIFTY-ONE NATIONS AND ONE HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND HEALTH WORKERS.

SEVERAL TIMES PREVIOUSLY AUTHORITIES HAD STATED THE BELIEF THAT THE DREAD DISEASE THAT HAS KILLED AND MAIMED MILLIONS OF PEOPLE THROUGHOUT HISTORY HAS BEEN WIPED OUT, ONLY TO HAVE AN ISOLATED OUTBREAK OCCUR. BUT SO CONFIDENT ARE SCIENTISTS NOW THAT AT A MEETING IN KENYA RECENTLY, SCIENTISTS FROM SEVERAL AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES SUGGESTED OFFERING A SUBSTANTIAL GLOBAL REWARD FOR ANYONE REPORTING A CASE OF SMALLPOX. AND MEDICAL AUTHORITIES NOW ARE NO LONGER RECOMMENDING THAT SMALLPOX VACCINATION BE REQUIRED FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL.

LD/RCS